

COMPOSITION 390: ENGLISH CAPSTONE Native American Literary Studies

Prof. Susan Bernardin

Class meets: Tuesday and Thursdays, 12:00-12:50, Fine Arts 110

Office: 315A Milne Library

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30pm; Wednesdays 1:30-3pm; and by appointment.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Composition 390 is a writing-intensive seminar required for seniors in the English major. A variable topics course, it emphasizes the application of analytical, research, and critical thinking skills. Students will be expected to engage with major critical and theoretical concerns within literary studies, and to produce a significant body of analytical writing. This semester's topic is the rapidly growing field of American Indian/Native Literary Studies. We will examine selected facets of this extraordinarily rich and innovative literature, including its formation in English; its aesthetic forms (poetry; novels; mixed-genre); its interrelationship with other indigenous arts such as visual work; oratory; beadwork, and wampum; and its foundation in political, legal, and cultural histories. We will address the driving debates within the field of Native literary studies while also considering Native literature's complicated relationship to canonical U.S. literature and American popular culture. Finally, this seminar is designed as part of a year-long campus program bringing Native writers, artists, and educators to campus. *Students in this seminar thus will have the rare opportunity to meet with some of the writers included in this syllabus.*

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*. Bantam, 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0553373684 0553373684

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. House of Anansi Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-800887846962.

Eric Gansworth, *A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function*. Syracuse University Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0815609001.

LeAnne Howe, *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story*. Aunt Lute Books, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-1879960787

Sherman Alexie, *Flight*. Grove Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0802170378

Heid Erdrich, *National Monuments*. Michigan State University Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0870138485.

Gerald Vizenor, *Shadow Distance: A Gerald Vizenor Reader*. Wesleyan University Press, 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0819562814

Course Reader, available only at Damascene Book Cellar.

Course Requirements and Policies

This seminar is designed in concert with "Opening the Door," a year-long campus lecture and event series aimed at making visible the contributions of contemporary Native American writers, educators, and artists. Hence there are several attendance requirements in conjunction with the course:

*Eric Gansworth's staged reading of his play, "The Patriot Act" (Thursday, February 10) and/or his collaborative multi-media play (Saturday, April 30).

*Heid Erdrich's reading from *National Monuments*, Thursday, March 3.

*Robin Kimmerer's lecture, Wednesday, April 6.

Extra credit: Attendance at Tom Porter's introduction, and filmmaker Andrea Sadler's documentary, "The Sacred Run: the Lotus and the Feather," at 3 p.m. Tuesday, February 1.

You will need to write 1-page review as part of your participation grade for 3 of these events.

Attendance: Please note that according to Campus Attendance Policy, a student's absence from 25% of scheduled class meetings can result in an Involuntary Withdrawal (WI) from the class. Students who miss three weeks of classes immediately prior to the final can expect to be barred from taking the exam. *It's always best to contact me, via email or phone, if you will need to miss class.*

Participation: Your active, engaged verbal participation is a *crucial* ingredient in this course. Each of you will be responsible for bringing to class a set of focused questions and observations about our course readings. You will also participate in on-line discussions, meant to complement our in-class work.

ANGEL: In addition to discussions, ANGEL will serve as a resource for some of our course content, including handouts, the syllabus, assignments, and useful links to websites, images, and videoclips.

Writing Requirements:

Informal assignments to facilitate your understanding of course material, and to interact with the "Opening the Door" programming.

Inquiry papers: You will write 6 short essays (**3 full pages** each) in which you offer a focused discussion of observations, inquiries, and ideas regarding course materials, including campus visits, books, visual work, articles, poems, and short stories. These assignments encourage active reading and comparative thinking across your courses for the English major, while also (ideally) serving as springboards for your research essay. You must complete 2 of the inquiry papers by mid-March; no inquiry papers accepted on *Miko Kings* or *Barking Water*.

Research Paper: 15+ pages of *sustained* inquiry into a research question generated by the course. Over the course of the semester, you will have a series of deadlines, from abstract and annotated bibliography to informal drafts.

Cell Phones and Texting: nononono. No. Nein. Nyet.

***Emergency Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place Procedures:** In the event of an emergency evacuation (i.e., fire or other emergency), classes meeting in Fine Arts are directed to reassemble at IRC Building so that all persons can be accounted for. Complete details of the College's emergency evacuation, shelter-in-place and other emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.oneonta.edu/security/>.

Disabilities: Any student with disabilities may consult the staff at the Services with the Students' Disabilities Office at #2137 or <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/sds/>. Students are welcome to consult with me so that I can work with Disability Services staff as needed.

Plagiarism: Students are responsible for understanding the policy on all aspects of academic dishonesty as published in the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate Catalog. Plagiarism and cheating will reduce your grade in this course to an "E," and I will refer you to the Standing Disciplinary Board.

Grading: Active Participation:	15%
Informal writing:	14%
Inquiry Papers:	36% (6% each)
Research essay:	35%

COURSE SCHEDULE

***Additional essays from the *Reader* will be incorporated. Our schedule is subject to change according to our needs as a class.**

Week 1: *Reel Indians: The Challenge of Native Literary Studies*

Th 1/20: Introduction to the course; "The Old Man's Lazy" (handout); "Crow Love" (handout).

Week 2: Critical Frameworks

T 1/25: Robin Kimmerer, "Learning to See"; Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, "The Indians are Alive"; Phil Deloria, "Unexpected Indians"; Craig Womack, Introduction and Chapter 1, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (all in *Reader*); Thomas King, *Truth about Stories* (chapter 2).

Th 1/27: Tom King, *Truth about Stories*, chapters 4-5; Simon Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism"; Jace Weaver, "Hope is a Thing with Feathers"; Louis Owens, "Apocalypse at the Two-Sox Hop"

Week 3: *Turtles All the Way Down: Haudenosaunee Aesthetics Or, Visualizing Sky Woman and Turtle Island*

T 2/1: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (in Reader)
King, chapter 3, *Truth about Stories*; LeAnne Howe, "Tribalography"

Tom Porter, Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Leader, and film director Andrea Sadler will introduce her documentary, "The Sacred Run: the Lotus and the Feather," in Craven Lounge at 3 p.m.

Th 2/3: Tom King, *Truth About Stories*, chapter 1; Ted Williams, "An Opening: Big Medicine from Six Nations"; "The Creation in Contemporary Haudenosaunee Art"; Maurice Kenny poems; Gansworth, "Identification Pleas"; "Sovereign to the Bone"; "Trick or Treat" (in Reader)

Week 4:

T 2/8: Eric Gansworth, *A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function*

Th 2/10: *Eric Gansworth visits class; his staged reading of his new play "Patriot Act" is at 5:30pm in IRC 3.*

Week 5: *What Remains: Contemporary Native Literature of Repatriation*

T 2/15: Gansworth, *A Half-Life*; Angela Haas, "Wampum as Hypertext" (in Reader).

Th 2/17: Heid Erdrich, *National Monuments*; E. Pauline Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion" (in Reader)

Winter Break!

Week 6:

T 3/1: Erdrich, *National Monuments*

Th 3/3: Heid Erdrich visits class. *National Monuments Reading, Craven Lounge, 7:30pm*

Week 7: *The Empire Writes Back: Foundational Texts*

T 3/8: Apess; "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man"; Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin), "Impressions of an Indian Childhood;" "School Days of an Indian Girl"; "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (in Reader)

Th 3/10: Zitkala-Sa; D'Arcy McNickle, "Train Time"; Laura Tohe "The Names"; Louise Erdrich, "The Runaways"; Jim Northrup, "ditched"; Sylvia Ross, "Tribal Identity Grade Three"; Molly McGlennen, "I Learned Irony in Order"; Gansworth, "It Goes Something Like This"; Nora Naranjo-Morse, "Gia's Song"

Week 8: *Gerald Vizenor, Survivance*

T 3/15: Excerpts, *Shadow Distance*

Th 3/17: *Harold of Orange* (film)

Week 9: *Tricksters, Tribal Humor, and Survivance*

T 3/22: Vine Deloria, "Indian Humor"; Jim Northrup, "rez car"; "Looking with Ben"; Naranjo-Morse, "A Well-Traveled Coyote"; Carter Revard, "A Report to

the Nation: Repossessing Europe"; Sherman Alexie, "Approximate Size of My Favorite Tumor" (in Reader)

Th 3/24: Tom King, *Green Grass, Running Water*; Leslie Silko, "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective; "Interior and Exterior Landscapes" (in Reader)

Week 10: *Survivance Coyote's Way: [The] Contemporary Native Novel*

T 3/29: GGRW

Th 3/31: GGRW

Week 11:

T 4/5: GGRW

Wed, April 6: Robin Kimmerer, Lecture, 7:30pm Craven Lounge

She might visit class this week.

Th 4/7: GGRW; Alexie

Week 12: Sherman Alexie: "Humor is My Green Card"

T 4/12: Alexie, *Flight*; "A Conversation with Sherman Alexie"; Bernardin, "Alexie-Vision: Getting the Picture" (in Reader)

Th 4/14: *Flight*

SPRING BREAK!

Week 13: Oklahoma: Indigenous Pasts; Indigenous Futures

T 4/26: Owens, "Blood Trails"; LeAnne Howe, *Miko Kings*

Th 4/28: *Miko Kings*

Reception, Eric Gansworth, "Home Fires and Reservation Roads," Visual Art Exhibit, Project Space Gallery, Fine Arts Building.

****Friday, April 29, Eric Gansworth Collaborative Performance, "Home Fires and Reservation Roads," at Goodrich Theater****

Week 14:

T 5/3: *Miko Kings*

Th 5/5: *Miko Kings*

Week 15

T 5/10: *Barking Water* (film by Sterlin Harjo)

Thursday, May 12, 2:00-4:30pm: Research sharing; Giveaway celebration.